

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, PhD

November 18, 2020

Leadership Matters

This report provides the Board of Trustees with information regarding Academy activities and the progress that we are making toward achieving our IMSA Impact and Outcomes Statement and Priority Outcomes. I organize the Report of the President, where appropriate, around the IMSA Impact and Outcomes document:

Three pillars:

1. STEM Teaching and Learning
2. Operational Capacity
3. Stakeholder Engagement

One Strategy—Strengthen Employee Engagement

Priorities for Academic Year 2020-2021

1. Equity and Excellence Plan: Year One of Action
2. Beyond surviving...Resolved to thrive (IMSA employees working remotely must do more than merely survive the year; we want to thrive!)

I provide information, updates and general observations with IMSA stakeholders, including IMSA employees, students, and parents via my [Personal Reflections](#) throughout the year.

SPECIAL NOTICE: Due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders, IMSA staff and students left the IMSA Campus on March 13, 2020, and continue to work, teach, and learn remotely. Only when required for a business purpose are IMSA staff working from our campus in Aurora.

STEM Teaching and Learning

[Halloween Spooktacular](#)

Instrumental music teacher, Mary Beth McCarthy and Visual Arts teacher, Joyce Symoniak led our hard working students in a creative presentation on October 30 and October 31, 2020, a Halloween Spooktacular Event. Kudos to our students, faculty members and to William McGrail and Kevin Broy for a wonderful final recording.

Student Mental Health

I continue to be concerned regarding the mental health and well-being of our students (and IMSA employees). Engaging in a rigorous curriculum at IMSA from home rather than in our residence halls heaps additional stress on our students, some who have a lot of family support systems and some who do not. IMSA joined Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago in a pilot on trauma-informed schools. We recently completed a universal mental health screening of all junior and senior students and we are providing mental health first aid training to IMSA

staff. We are also hiring a third mental health counselor to support our students. On November 4, 2020, I joined in on a faculty conversation on the mental health of our students with Ms. Katie Berger, Chief Student Affairs Officer, and our two current mental health counselors, Kevin Kusy and Takeisha Rheams.

IMSA Local 604-IFT-AFT

We continue to engage in bargaining sessions with the IMSA Council on developing our first Collective Bargaining Agreement. Bargaining sessions occurred on September 17, 30, and October 15, 2020. Another session planned for November 12, 2020 has been cancelled by mutual agreement between Lynn Himes and Adam Harding, the IFT field rep in order to allow more time for preparation of management's counter-proposals on Working Conditions and Evaluations. The next bargaining session is scheduled for November 24, 2020.

Class of 2024

The Admissions team is engaged in recruiting the next class. On Saturday, September 19, 2020, we held our first ever virtual Preview Day. We had 324 confirmed attendees (behind 190 screens). Thanks to the faculty who taught mock classes and the other staff who are helping to recruit the Class of 2024. Our next Preview Day is scheduled for Sunday, December, 6, 2020. With the resignation of Admissions Director Kelly Lofgren, Ms. Alexis Thomas, Chief Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Officer, engaged the services of Kalix Marketing to support our Admissions Office.

Operational Capacity

Repopulation Plan Submitted to the Board of Trustees

Immediately following the release of our Fall Reopening Plan in September, Ms. Alexis Thomas, Transition Task Force Lead, began to coordinate our Repopulation Plan, Titan Pact. The Titan Pact is based on multiple surveys of all stakeholders, staff, including faculty input, IMSA Local 604, AFT-IFT feedback, student involvement, and considerable involvement from our health provider Rush Copley. At the Board of Trustees November 18, 2020 meeting, I will announce a time frame for our return to campus as part of our presentation to the Board.

Budget Considerations

On October 5, 2020, IMSA met with Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Executive Director, Ginger Ostro and her staff to present the Trustee approved IMSA budget. IBHE shared with us their understanding of the state budget. Later in the month, on October 30, 2020, the IBHE and the Governor's Office for Management and Budget (GOMB) requested that IMSA submit three different budget scenarios by Friday, November 13, 2020.

- **Scenario 1** - Maintenance Budget, defined as what is needed to sustain present activities for next year with no new programs or expansion to include Cost of Living Allowances
- **Scenario 2** - 5% reduction from the current year budget includes reducing programs, staff furloughs and/or layoffs, cost reductions, fee increases, etc.
- **Scenario 3** - 10% reduction from the current budget to include eliminating programs and services and areas identified under Scenario 2.

Cabinet worked on a tight timeline to create these scenarios. Based on their input, I met several times with Ms. Kimberly Corrao, Executive Director for Business Services, to prepare our final submission by the due date. These requests from IBHE and GOMB came to IMSA before the results of the November election concerning the state constitutional tax amendment.

Stakeholder Engagement

[Leon Lederman Tribute and Alumni Awards](#)

IMSA hosted a Tribute to Dr. Leon Lederman and recognized our 2020 Alumni Awards on October 23, 2020. Tamora Kimmitt '91' was recognized with the Alumni Titan Award; Rhiana Gunn-Wright '07 and Amy Meek '98' were recognized for the Alumni Distinguished Awards. Click above to see the show.

[Veterans Day](#)

IMSA also hosted a Veterans Day virtual program November 6 to celebrate and honor the bravery and sacrifices of all of our U.S. Veterans. Host Eric Pan '21, IMSA students, the IMSA Combined Choir, members of the IMSA Wind Ensemble, and Alumni Veterans Lt. Col Kenyatta Ruffin '99 and Ms. Jen Tietz '97 were featured guests and performers.

Webinar Presentation to Leaders in Puerto Rico

In response to a request by the Puerto Rico Education Foundation, on September 24, 2020, I represented IMSA by presenting a webinar to school leaders in Puerto Rico on the evolving role of the school principal during COVID-19 ([La evolución del rol del Director Escolar en tiempos de COVID-19](#)).

Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC)

Over the past several years, I served on the Board of Directors of IWERC. IWERC is officially now a part of the Discovery Partners Institute and my role changed officially to a member of the External Advisory Committee for the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC). Chaired by John Easton, the IWERC External Advisory Committee convenes prominent academic and civic leaders to seek their insights into how IWERC can make meaningful contributions to education and workforce research in Illinois.

P-20 Council and Weekly Call-in to the Governor's Office

I continue to represent IMSA at the P-20 Council. Our most recent meeting was November 6, 2020, where we began to discuss a "Marshall" plan for education in Illinois to recover from the learning loss experienced as a result of the pandemic. Social and emotional issues were also discussed at this meeting. Additionally, each week, I call in to the Governor's Office for a meeting with Educational Leadership Management, including IL State Superintendent of Education, IBHE Executive Director, and Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz.

Academy Priorities

Equity and Excellence Plan: Year One of Action

This past quarter, IMSA sophomores, juniors and seniors participated in diversity education programs. The sophomores focused on micro aggressions and implicit bias, analyzing the video,

"This is America" with their Navigation groups . The juniors focused on race from within both an historical and current context, which included watching the James Baldwin documentary, "I am Not Your Negro" and meeting in affinity groups for a facilitated discussion by Residence Counselors. The seniors focused on gender and sexuality, which included viewing the Laverne Cox documentary, the "T" Word and engaging in discussion around LGBTQIA+ issues with Dr. Francesca Maresca of Rutgers University, an expert in sexual and reproductive health and justice, mental health/suicide prevention, LGBTQ health and wellness in higher education.

Beyond surviving...Resolved to thrive (IMSA employees working remotely must do more than merely survive the year; we want to thrive!)

We celebrated Mental Health Initiative (MHI) Week, September 14-18, 2020. On Friday, September 18, we held our [MHI Assembly](#). During this year's MHI week, we made concerted efforts to reach out to staff and address IMSA employees' mental health. We released the attached IMSA Self-Care Plan to encourage employees to reflect on how they can take care of their wellness in the physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and work/professional dimensions. We've asked managers to have conversations with their teams to provide additional support after employees have taken their self-assessments.

Leadership Update from Select Cabinet Members

Update from Dr. Comfort Akwaji-Anderson is attached. Newsletters from Student Affairs are attached.